

March 17, 2007

Your Honor:

I am writing to you regarding Mr. Tarquin McCluskey, who you will soon be sentencing.

I have known Tarquin and his family for just over ten years. He has been a member of the Reformed Dutch Church at Hyde Park for that time, and more. He has served as an elder on our consistory. Tarquin gave great assistance to the resuscitation of our Odell pipe organ, silent for thirty two years, but no longer, thanks to Tarquin's talent and time. It is a treasure reborn, thanks, in good part, to Tarquin. Beyond that, he has been available for both mundane chores, like fixing my computer, and loftier matters requiring wisdom and grace as a leader of our congregation. Presently, he is under church discipline, our elders and myself overseeing his reconciliation and restoration. Tarquin has been open to such direction over the past fifteen months. Believe me when I tell you we all thought long and hard about putting aside a pastoral response.

During much of the past ten years, my eldest daughter's best friend has been Stanzie McCluskey, Tarquin and Cathy's only daughter.

As you can well imagine, the call I received from Cathy some fifteen months ago struck me profoundly. Tarquin arrested with such serious charges was appalling and utterly revolting. It was also freightening knowing my daughter's proximity to Tarquin over the past decade, though we are certain now that there was no inappropriate verbal or physical contact; certain enough to be writing this sort of appeal.

Tarquin's lack of judgement leading up to his arrest has been outrageous and completely unacceptable. And what a tremendous waste, not only for Tarquin, but for Cathy, Tyson, Stanzie, and Eli. All of them put into harm's way now.

Tarquin is known as a loyal friend, the sort one can call at the most inconvenient of times. He is an utterly devoted father to Tyson, Stanzie and Eli, and understands the importance of being present with his children. He is encouraging and nurturing. He adores his wife, Cathy. He has spent the last six or seven years rehabilitating their 18th century farmhouse, a tremendous labor of love. He's been a terrific employee for Fed Ex, keeping a fleet of delivery trucks on the road as a master mechanic. Why Tarquin would throw all this away is beyond me, and to slide into this specific sort of deviant behavior, I simply cannot account for it, though I am beginning to see the why. Even so, it all leaves me grief stricken for Tarquin and afraid for his family.

In the meantime, Tarquin has been compliant in terms of his going to groups, going beyond what is expected. He has made good connections with those who are in the midst of recovery for the same sort of malady. Tarquin has spoken often about his ongoing therapy and how it has been a help both in terms of awareness and insight, but also the sort of redemptive action he must take to become the person he must be. And like so many, there is much to grieve that cannot be relived. This does not take away the offense, but it does give a perspective and also offers a way

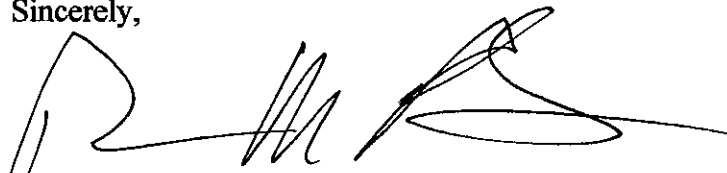
out.

This is a serious offense, and while we understand you are duty-bound to meet out justice, we ask you do so with an eye to reconciliation, even salted with mercy. I am thinking that Tarquin's family could use some hope now, and I request you offer it to them. I fear the greater damage may well be with Tarquin's family, who are innocent.

We're a congregation that does well with people in recovery. It has been our experience that recovery can be tougher than incarceration, and offer better satisfaction in terms of turning a person to living a rounded, blessed, and fruitful life. It seems possible to me that a comprehensive and extensive recovery program, as well as home-bound restrictions, could well bring this matter to a successful conclusion.

Let justice be done, your Honor, but we also ask that somehow this story might come about and end with something like redemption. I do think such a thing is possible in this particular case. Thank you so much for your consideration, and bless you in your good work.

Sincerely,



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